



Inside CFSA

For Our Child-Serving Community

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Year in Review Shows DC Child Welfare Progress

On Jan. 6, 2003, Judge Thomas F. Hogan formally ended CFSA's one-year probation and accepted the agency's Interim Implementation Plan. In 2002, the District and CFSA made measurable progress in reforming the child welfare system. While numerous challenges are still ahead, the local safety net for abused and neglected children and troubled families is growing stronger.

Services

In 2002, CFSA improved services to children and families by achieving 75% of 20 **performance goals** (during a baseline period between May 2001 and May 2002) and ending the agency's one-year probation set by the Federal Court. Among these performance goals and other achievements were:

- Increasing the proportion of children in foster and kinship care with **current case plans**, (a plan for assuring that each child receives proper care and that appropriate services are provided in the process of transitioning to permanency).
- Increasing the number of finalized **adoptions** in a 12-month period to 330, about a 20% increase from the same period in 2001.
- Reducing a backlog of more than 800 **investigations** in May 2001 to under 300 in May 2002, while assuming responsibility for investigating child abuse allegations from the police and continuing to investigate reports of child neglect.
- **Moving away from congregate care** for children and greatly reducing the number of young children in group homes.
- Improving interactions with the evolving **Family Court**, with the goal of reducing the number of judges social workers have to appear before and time spent in court. CFSA and the Court are to **build teams** of attorneys, social workers, and judges to achieve better outcomes for children.
- Creating the new capacity to **license group homes and independent living programs** and meeting deadlines for the first-ever round of licensing.
- Creating an internal **Training Academy** to support staff training and professional development—and establishing training units for new case-carrying staff that combine on-the-job and classroom training.
- Expanding the **clinical expertise** available to social workers to help support decision-making in complex cases through clinical staffings, the Multi-Agency Planning Team (MAPT), an expanded health unit, and other approaches.



- **Improving administrative support** for social workers through improvements in FACES designed jointly by program and Information Systems staff.

"Working in child welfare is one of the toughest jobs in the world. That's particularly true at CFSA," said CFSA Director Olivia Golden. "The agency is coming back from years of neglect, and to make a positive difference for children, we are having to establish very basic systems, policies, and resources. There is much to do in the new year. We look forward to continuing our momentum toward better results for children."



In October 2002, two independent sources-- the Federal Court Monitor and Council for Court Excellence--found significant positive changes for children at CFSA and in the District's child welfare system as a whole.

Next Steps

Currently, CFSA is operating under the directives of the Interim Implementation Plan and is negotiating a longer term Implementation plan, with the *LaShawn* plaintiffs, which will prescribe agency performance goals for the next two to three years. Target date for finalizing that plan is mid-February. ■

CFSA Plans Internal Moves

For the first time in many years, CFSA reached a full complement of social workers in November 2002. To make room for them and for other new staff, CFSA will relocate internal administrations within our 400 Sixth Street headquarters and between the Sixth Street and 955 L'Enfant Plaza locations in early February. The move is scheduled to take place Feb. 7-10. All employees who move will get new telephone numbers. We will publish new numbers for administrations that have moved in the February issue of this newsletter. We ask for your patience while we make these changes and staff up to strengthen the safety net for children and families. ■

CFSA Public Information faxes this newsletter monthly to providers and other partners. To provide comments or to update your fax number, call (202) 442-6015. Editor: Derek Stewart ■